

Records & Archives Mgt Committee

Minutes

February 9, 2007
10:00am

William Munroe Special Collections
Concord Free Public Library
Concord, MA

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The committee traveled to Concord to see the recently renovated (reopened about Jan. 2005) Special Collections section of the Concord Public Library. Those in attendance were Marilyn Day, Jane Hinckley, Sandy Martinez, Ginny Moore, Bob Oliphant, Kaari Tari, and Villu Tari. We were the guests of Leslie Wilson, Curator of Special Collections, who talked to us about their collection and gave us a tour of their facility.

The Special Collections (SC) section of the Concord Library dates from the Library's founding in 1873 when, with great foresight, citizens were asked to donate material of local significance to ensure "an appropriate gift of the present generation to posterity." SC does not serve as a depository for other town organizations (although they had done so in the past); i.e., all the material in the collection has been donated to SC and is owned by SC, with the single exception of early Town records, which are housed in the SC but are legally under the purview of the Town Clerk.

The Library is run by a board of trustees of about 8 persons. They choose their own members, so it is self-perpetuating. The trustees own the library building and the Special Collections. Leslie reports to the trustees.

The Special Collections section in the basement of the library was enlarged (3 times its original size) when the library was renovated in 2004-2005 at a cost of \$8 million, privately raised. SC was the focus of the renovation. SC maintains a web site at <http://www.concordnet.org/library/scollect/scoll.html>.

Two good places to look for grants are the National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC) (<http://www.archives.gov/nhprc>) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (<http://www.neh.gov>). Politics are always involved. NHPRC sends you comments on your grant application so you have a chance to address any issues raised. NEH just sends you a yes or no response to your application. Another source of funds is the Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) funded through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (<http://mblc.state.ma.us/>).

Fire code required sprinklers in the vault, but they are "dry pipe" sprinklers so that if a sprinkler head is accidentally broken, the vault is not flooded. This is a very expensive

type of system. The HVAC for the vault is located outside the vault enclosed in an adjacent staff room. The contractor wanted to put it in the vault, but Leslie insisted it stay outside the vault.

Systematics, Inc. at Westborough, MA, (<http://www.systematicsinc.com>) provided the compact shelving. Leslie prefers the wider shelves put in during the renovation to the older, narrower shelves, because you can put archival storage boxes back-to-back on the wider shelves. Probably a combination of the sizes is best, depending on the details of the collection to be stored. Leslie thinks "Systematics is Great!" The SC compact shelving is hand cranked (as opposed to the more expensive motor driven shelving), which works just fine.

The library has a significant photograph collection. They charge a repro fee of \$75 per use (commercial or not-for-profit) for photos. This is one of the few ways SC earns money. Their fee schedule is on the Photo Orders/Repro Permissions section of their web site. The scans they put on their web site are of low quality (75 dpi).

SC uses Iron Mountain (<http://www.ironmountain.com>) for off-site storage of microfilm of parts of their collection. The cost is about \$1500 per year. This is part of their Disaster Plan (which you also need to get grant funds).

They are working with a local company to digitize some of their film and oral histories. They will originally be put on DVDs and at some time in the future will be transferred to whatever newer and better technology comes along.